

Convention Center Site, District of
Columbia

HABS No. DC-384

Square 343, 344, 372, 373, and re-
servation 174

Including: 800 & 900 Block of 9th Street,
Westside
900 & 1000 Block of H Street,
Northside
800 Block of 11th Street,
Eastside
900 & 1000 Block of New York
Avenue
900 & 1000 Block of I Street
800 & 900 Block of 10th Street
Washington, D.C.

HABS,
DC,
WASH,
252-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

CONVENTION CENTER SITE, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

HABS,
DC,
WASH,
252-

Location:

Squares 343, 344, 372, 373, 374, and Reservation 174
Including: 800 & 900 blocks of 9th Street, West side
900 & 1000 blocks of H Street, North side
800 block of 11th Street, East side
900 & 1000 blocks of New York Avenue
900 & 1000 blocks of I Street
800 & 900 blocks of 10th Street

U.S.G.S. Map Washington, D.C. WEST Quadrangle
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:

18.324200.4307540 11th & NY.
18.324460.4307640 9th & NY.
18.324460.4307400 9th & H St.
18.324400.4307400 11th & H

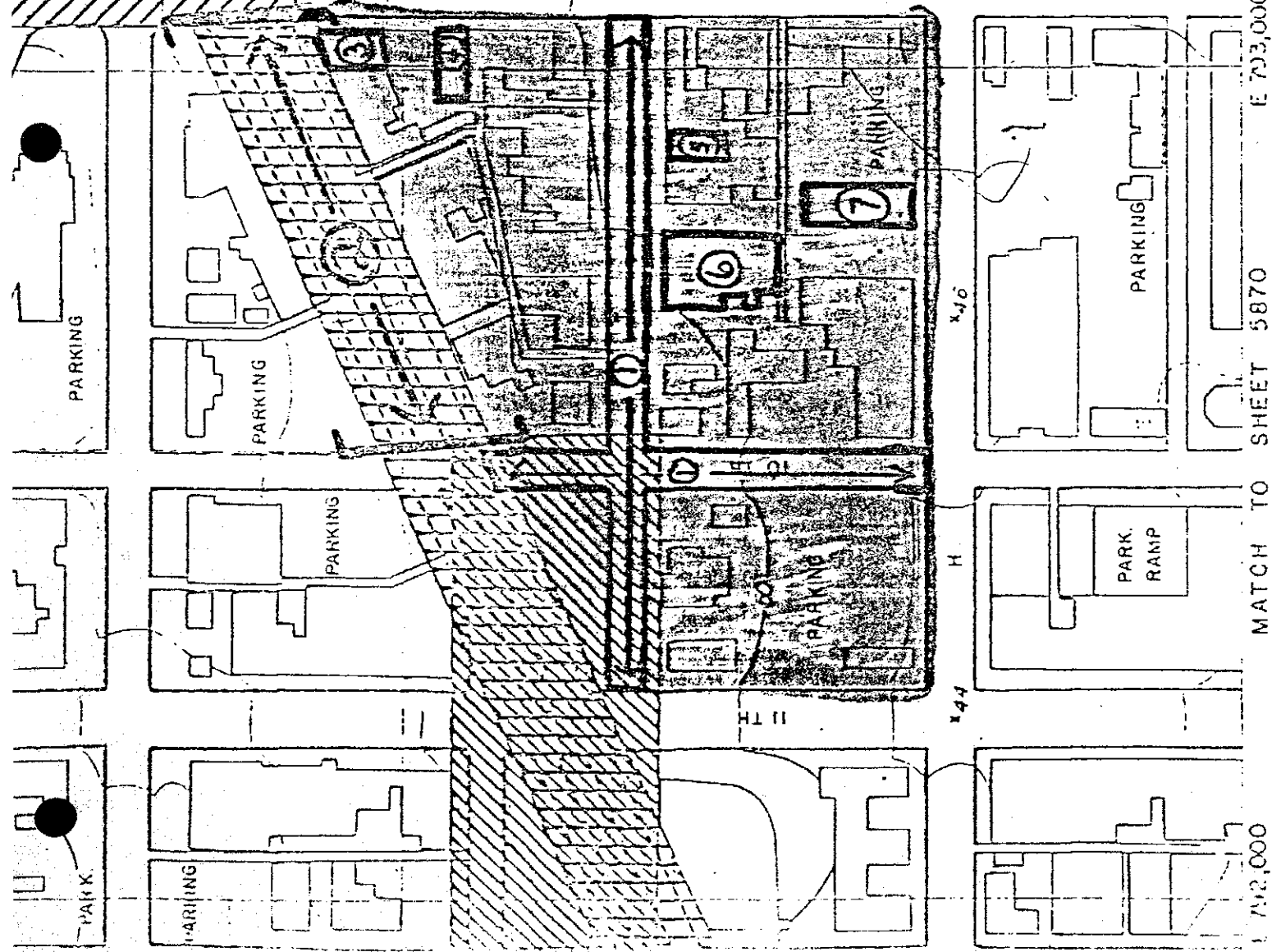
Significance:

Included in the Convention Center Site were many examples of 19th and 20th century residential, commercial, and mixed use buildings, such as: the American Mosaic Company Building (DC-387); Pepco Power Station (DC-388); Mount Vernon Apartments (DC-385); Mount Vernon Theatre (DC-254); and the Washington Lodge #15, B.P.O. Elks (DC-386). Also of note are both sides of the 900 block of New York Avenue. These street-scapes remained as one of the few major avenues in the downtown area featuring nearly all of its early lowscale buildings. The street layout of the Convention Center Site derived from the 1791-92 design of Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant. L'Enfant's plan for the Nations Capital is considered to be one of the worlds finest examples of baroque urban design. Many of L'Enfant's unique design elements were present in the Convention Center Site. Most noticable was the combination of diagonal avenues superimposed over a grid street system. Under this system radial avenues cut diagonal through the grid, creating a system of major thoroughfares connecting monuments and public spaces by the shortest route. Another element of the L'Enfant plan was the variance in size of individual square blocks, avoiding the monotony often present in other grid designs. Finally, the Convention Center Site included the use of open reservations, or spaces, on either side of the grass and tree planted median of the 900 block of New York Avenue. Such open spaces represent a conscious effort to enhance vistas and allow for the placement of small monuments.

Convention Center Site, District of
Columbia

HABS No. DC-384 (Page 2)

Taken as a whole, the Convention Center Site is significant by nature of its location. The northern border of this area is New York Avenue; one of L'Enfant's major avenues, which leads to the White House. In addition, this area is situated a place where commercial downtown begins to become a residential area. This site served as a place of synthesis for the two types of downtown development, with the commercial district to the south, and more residential areas to the north.



1. I Street, between 9th & 11th;
10th Street, between H & New York Ave.
2. Rows of buildings framing 900 block of
New York Ave.
3. 922--24 9th Street;
4. Old Mt. Vernon Theatre, 918 9th Street.
5. 912 I Street. American Mosaic Co.
6. Potomac Electric Power Co. substation,
922 I Street
7. BPO Elks Lodge No. 15, 919 I Street.

MATCH TO SHEET 5870

000,000

Convention Center Site, District of
Columbia
HABS No. DC-384 (Page 4)

Project Information: This project was undertaken by the District of Columbia Government in compliance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigate effort in the completion of the Convention Center Project. John A. Burns, AIA, and Emily J. Harris were the HABS project coordinators. Photographs were taken by R.S. Scurlock in October 1979. The written data was prepared by Robert S. Lange of the HABS staff in July 1980, from material compiled by Margaret Orelup of the National Register of Historic Places in October 1978 for a unilateral determination of eligibility for the New York Avenue, 900 Block Historic District, and Elements of the L'Enfant Plan.